

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education
Ministry of Economic Development

RECORD NUMBER OF STUDENTS CHOOSE TRADES TRAINING

VICTORIA – A record 470 secondary school graduates were each awarded \$1,000 government scholarships for their success in the Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA) program this year, Education Minister Shirley Bond announced today.

“The number of students receiving SSA scholarships has increased by 24 per cent since last year,” said Bond. “It’s clear that more students are taking advantage of the Secondary School Apprenticeship program, which allows them to get a head start on their trades career while still completing high school.”

The \$470,000 in total funding for SSA scholarships is shared equally between the Ministry of Education and the Industry Training Authority, funded through the Ministry of Economic Development. Students often use these scholarships to pay for further technical training or to purchase required trades tools.

“It is important for the growth and competitiveness of the provincial economy that we continue to encourage young people to enter the trades sector,” said Colin Hansen, Minister of Economic Development. “These scholarships will help ensure students in the SSA program are able to pursue post-secondary trades training once they graduate high school.”

The program allows any student aged 15 or over to register as an apprentice and receive 16 credits towards graduation from work experience hours while continuing classroom learning. To receive a SSA scholarship, a student must:

- Register for the SSA program with the Industry Training Authority.
- Graduate from high school with a C+ average or better on Grade 12 level courses.
- Complete a minimum of 480 hours of paid work as an apprentice as part of their graduation program.
- Still be apprenticing six months after graduation, either in the workplace or enrolled in a post-secondary technical trades training program.

“With the current demand for skilled workers, a career in trades is a wise choice,” said Bond. “And we are seeing a high success rate for students following through with trades training. In fact, 84 per cent of this year’s applicants were still apprenticing six months after graduation. The SSA scholarships are awarded to recognize those students.”

Over 1,400 students from 52 school districts participated in this year’s SSA program. The Accelerated Credit Enrolment in Industry Training (ACE IT) program is also growing. ACE IT offers students the chance to begin the technical (in-school) training portion of their apprenticeship. A total of 2,935 secondary students are currently participating in the ACE IT program, 283 of whom are also participating in SSA.

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"These programs offer a world of opportunities for B.C. students" said Bond. "Students enrolled in the SSA program work towards certification in one of over 100 apprenticeable trades, including dairy production technicians, sprinkler system installers, and hairstylists. These students make up our labour force of tomorrow, and we need more of them to keep up with our growing economy."

The SSA scholarships are part of this year's \$96-million Industry Training Authority budget, which includes an increase of approximately \$6.6 million for trades training and skills development for 2007/08. The increased budget delivers on government's commitment to add 7,000 apprenticeship training spaces over three years.

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A complete list of scholarship recipients can be viewed at:
www.mediaroom.gov.bc.ca/DisplayEventDetails.aspx?eventId=356

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